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MAUGHAM THE ARTIST

—Seymour Krim

THE

Commonweal

Nuclear War

by T. F. Walkowicz

and

William Pfaff

Nicholas Joost John A. Lukacs Michael Harrington

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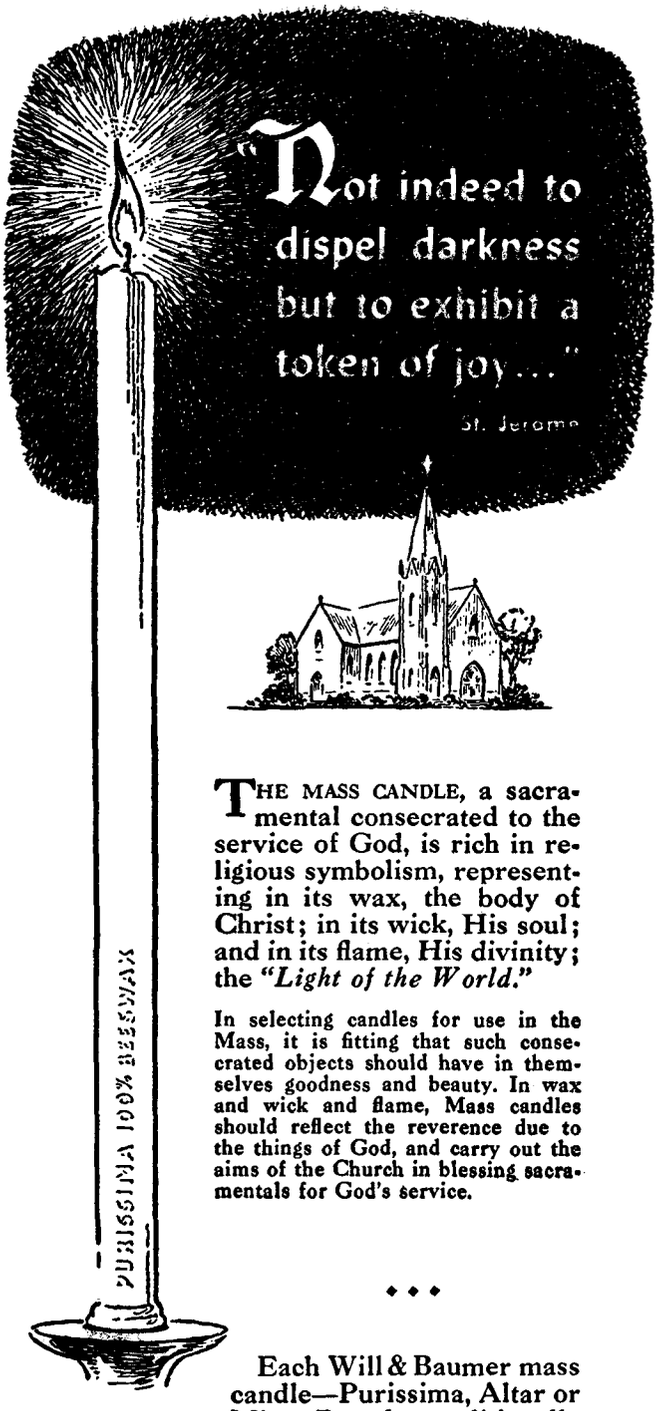

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THE

Commonweal

week by week

MARSHALL PLAN FOR ASIA

TWO developments recently in the news illustrate the nature and extent of the problem we face in Asia. The first was a report by the Commerce Department which pointed out that in the past twenty-five years Americans have raised their standard of living by about forty per cent. During this period, the volume of goods and services produced annually in the United States rose more than one hundred per cent. Behind this increase were not only considerable population increases but substantial gains in productivity due to improved labor skills, technological improvements, larger amounts of capital equipment, and better organization and management. What these figures mean is that every day America is producing and using more of everything, from food to automobiles, from houses to diapers.

In contrast to this report are the news items on recent developments in non-Communist Asia. There the prospects are grim in Asia's perennial race against starvation. And as recognition of the scope of Asia's problem increases, more and more experts feel that the technical assistance of the Point Four program is not nearly enough to raise the Asian standard of living substantially in the near future. Yet that is precisely what needs to be done.

The peoples of Asia have so far received comparatively little of the fruits of the Industrial Revolution. Once they went hungry without realizing that there was any other course. Now they have reached another stage. They cannot yet achieve plenty themselves, but they now realize that plenty is no longer out of the question. Today they do not and will not accept the idea that Asian nations are fated to perpetual poverty. They do not and will not accept the notion that famine and starvation and premature death are part of the inevitable order of things. And who can blame them?

Here, it seems to us, is an issue which separates those who talk a good game of anti-Communism and those who are willing to sacrifice for it. We have viewed with considerable concern the military cuts made by this Administration in the face of the Soviet threat, and it has been a source of amazement to us that so many articulate voices which are counted to be anti-Communist were silent while this went on. Now the practical measures people are willing to back in order to save Asia provide another good index of true anti-Communism, as opposed to the resolution-passing, platform-style type.

We know that in some circles it is fashionable to dismiss discussions of poverty in Asia as the idle vaporizing of "do-gooders." But true though it is that the poverty of Asia would pose a profound moral problem for the West, entirely aside from the Communist threat, the fact remains that Asia today poses a challenge that immediately and directly involves our national self-interest, and self-interest in the narrowest sense of the term.

REPORTS from Asia continue to indicate that economic development inside Communist China is proceeding much more rapidly than that in the non-Communist Asian countries. A highly centralized government, Communist discipline, aid from the Soviet Union, and a heavy hand on the consumer, conspire to make this development inside Communist China possible. But for the average Asian these aspects are overshadowed by the fact that economic development is taking place. If the non-Communist nations of Asia are not to be hypnotized into the Communist orbit, it is essential that we show them that economic development can be achieved without turning away from political freedom.

Happily, at this point there are more and more indications that the Eisenhower Administration is preparing to face this fact. While he was in this country, Premier Yoshida of Japan suggested a four million dollar annual "Marshall Plan for Asia." Although Secretary of State Dulles was not publicly enthusiastic about the idea, the Administration is said to have begun preliminary studies in this direction months ago. And these studies indicate

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that what has to be added to technical assistance is investment capital, of the kind unavailable from private sources, and over and above the strictly military aid and direct relief now being employed in Asia.

In the concept of a "Marshall Plan for Asia" there are many difficulties. The problems of Asia are vastly different from those in Europe which called the original Marshall Plan into being. But one distinct advantage is the fact that in Asia a considerably smaller amount of money each year would work miracles. And with the prospect that our military expenditures will level off in the neighborhood of thirty-five billion each year, an investment of something like five billion a year for economic development in Asia seems clearly money well spent.

Perhaps the most significant and encouraging thing about the prospect of such large-scale economic aid for Asia is the change it represents in Administration thinking. Up to now there has always been real danger that the Administration would try to deal with the problem of Communism in Asia almost exclusively in military terms. In this latest development the Administration is showing the kind of imagination and foresight that is essential if the West is to win the battle for the uncommitted peoples of Asia.

CATHOLICS AND McCARTHY

FROM 1950 until today The Commonweal has been a consistent opponent of Wisconsin's junior Senator. We have fought both his methods and his objectives as we understood their actual effect on American life, and we will continue to fight them for as long as they are a threat to the nation's sanity and security. But we have insisted all along that this was not a "Catholic" fight, that in it no Catholic had a right to involve the Church. Thus, some months ago, when certain of Senator McCarthy's critics urged the Bishops of this country to go on record as condemning the Senator we said, in a lead-editorial, that such urgings were highly ill-advised, that this was a struggle in which the Church must not be asked to commit herself—on either side.

We are sure that the great majority of American Catholics agree with us on this point, whatever their opinion of Mr. McCarthy may be. Unfortunately, a small but vociferous—and fanatical—group of Senator McCarthy's Catholic followers have not agreed, but have attempted to tie the cause of religion to the cause of the Senator. These people, inveterate letter-writers and petition-signers that they are, have made a noise all out of proportion to their numbers and have created sufficient mischief to convince some people that Catholics are in fact en masse behind McCarthyism. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth, and nothing could be worse for the cause of Catholicism in America than the furthering of this myth. For to bind the Church to the temporal fortunes of men —whether they be heroes or demagogues—is to betray the Church.

Those who would bind the Church to the declining fortunes of Mr. McCarthy, however, seem to have been particularly active recently, and reports of their crusading have been made in the press. Untypical as their efforts may be, they can yet do limitless damage to the Church.

For example, as much as one would like to, it does not seem possible to doubt reports that petitions against censuring Senator McCarthy have been circulated by teachers in a few Catholic schools around the country, that some official parish organizations have pushed these petitions as a form of "Catholic Action," and that a few priests have spoken against censure from their pulpits. These things have happened, and they have, justly, caused scandal.

We believe that adequate grounds for censuring Senator McCarthy exist. But we would oppose the circulation of a censure petition under official or semi-official Catholic auspices quite as strongly as we oppose and deplore the pro-McCarthy activities which are taking place under such auspices now. That these are the activities of a fanatical minority does not lessen their scandal or their shame. When such things happen it must be made clear by other Catholics that they represent only an ill-advised

NEXT WEEK

FRANK GIBNEY writes on the character and significance of the late Andrei Vishinsky:

"Did Vishinsky believe in anything? Certainly his conduct at the Moscow trials, and when he engineered the Communist taking over of Latvia in 1940 and Romania, in 1944, showed him a man not moved by ordinary moral considerations. He had begun, granted, as a convinced Marxist. In so far as he lived in the 'world of socialism,' as he called it, he probably believed in it. He was probably, also, a strong Russian nationalist, in the same way that Stalin was—his nationalism doubtless reinforced by his Polish origin. If the West was his enemy, he saw it not only as the enemy of the new Marxist Russia, but also as the traditionally suspect West of his spiritual forebears, the statesmen of Old Russia."

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few and in no way involve the whole of Catholic opinion on Senator McCarthy, opinion which, happily, remains divided the way such debatable things should be. What should unite Catholics, regardless of their opinions, is a determination not to involve the Church.

THREE DECADES OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

THE announcement that Monsignor Raymond A. McGowan has resigned as Director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference because of poor health calls attention to a most fruitful life work. Msgr. McGowan has energetically served the Department for thirty-four years. He was also the moving spirit in such similarly constructive activities as the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems and the Catholic Association for International Peace. Happily Msgr. McGowan will continue as a member of the Department and will concentrate on inter-American problems from his new post in San Antonio, Texas. Our best wishes go with him. Msgr. George G. Higgins, his successor as Director, is, together with his predecessor, a disciple of the late Msgr. John A. Ryan who undauntedly and for so many years championed the cause of social justice in the United States and originally organized the Social Action Department. Msgr. Higgins has been a member of the Department for ten years and its Assistant Director since 1946. His forthright column on social issues, "The Yardstick," is published by a number of leading diocesan papers. Msgr. Higgins brings to his new responsibilities a vigorous and well-based approach that will accomplish much. We extend him the warmest felicitations and good wishes in his new task.

THE THIRTEEN PRISONERS

COMMUNIST China stirred the embers of war again late last month when it jailed thirteen Americans, missing since the Korean war, on spy charges.

The Chinese say that these thirteen—eleven Air Force men and two civilians—were engaged in parachuting spies into China. The Chinese claim that the two civilians were agents of the Central Intelligence Agency. The United States government denies these charges, saying that the Air Force personnel were shot down over North Korea in January of 1953, and the civilians were Department of the Army employees who were lost when a Seoul-to-Tokyo flight disappeared at sea. The argument is irrelevant in any event. International law holds that military personnel in uniform cannot be regarded as spies. The eleven Air Force men were legitimate prisoners of war, and the Chinese failure to exchange them at the end of the Korean war, their denial to British inquiries that they were holding the men, and now their sentencing of these men to long prison terms, constitute a series of outrageous violations of international law.

How to get the thirteen back? As the Chinese are using them as political hostages, there undoubtedly is a ransom which they would accept. And the ransom probably is admittance to the United Nations. The proper word for this is blackmail, and the United Nations could never honorably accede to it.

Senator Knowland suggests that the United States follow an opposite course: blockade China. This *might* work. Counter-pressure is the only form of negotiation which the Communist empire has thus far been very responsive to, and if the blockade hurt the Chinese economy sufficiently, the prisoners might be traded. What is more likely, however, is that a blockade would lead to a bleeding and indecisive war on the Chinese borders. Recognizing this, Secretary Dulles has made it clear that the United States will not resort to acts of war to free the thirteen.

There is also another imposing fly in the ointment. A blockade of China would have very damaging political consequences throughout Asia. In our activities in Asia we tread a narrow wire. The first principle of our policy must be that "free" Asia be saved from Communism. It is of little moment here whether Americans want to save Asia out of cold military motives—to deny the Communists manpower, food and resources essential to war—or whether we wish to save it out of a sense of human fraternity. The principle remains: Communist expansion must be stopped.

But the non-Communist nations of Asia do not always see things as we do. Excluding the Stalinist minorities in the various states, the people of Asia

There is progress to report in the Anniversary campaign for the week which included the long Thanksgiving weekend. More than two hundred new long-term subscriptions were received, about half of them Christmas gifts. These brought the gap between the present reality and our goal down to 2,839 new subscriptions. For those who want to help, the back cover of this issue includes a coupon for new Christmas gifts.

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have no desire to be incorporated into the monolithic Communist system. But they have mixed feelings towards the new China: admiration for its material accomplishments; distaste for its regimentation; a certain pride in Chinese military power; a sense of respect for the sweeping new international status of China; and finally (and most important) a feeling that China, whatever may be said against it, is an authentic Asian anti-colonial power.

The non-Communist people of Asia feel that the American-supported governments of Nationalist China, South Korea, and Thailand are reactionary in their domestic affairs, and are puppets of the West.

We Americans may regard this Asian point of view as incredibly narrow—a hypnosis as fatal as that of the rabbit that squats before the cobra. Yet American anxieties will not change Asian attitudes. And every hostile move we make against China is likely to send resentment reverberating through Southeast Asia. The Chinese cries of "imperialist aggression" still find a hearing.

This, then, is the tightrope: how to take the hard military measures necessary to contain the Chinese Communists without driving more Asians into sympathetic association with China? How to win the sympathies of the uncommitted Asians without appeasement of the relentless and skillful Chinese totalitarianism?

The issue of the thirteen prisoners is one case in many. It is another of the Chinese maneuvers designed to tighten the American dilemma. Mao Tse-tung deliberately antagonizes America while he courts and flatters Southeast Asia. In the case of the prisoners he may have slipped slightly; world reaction was hostile. On the whole, however, he does well, too well.

In this situation, American obligations are clear: we must win the freedom of these men. If we have to take stern measures, then let them be taken. But let it not be with noise and bluster but with some hard advice, together with a meaningful threat or two, to Premier Malenkov. American and British pressure on Moscow is more likely to bring results than anything else.

NO LIVING ROOMS

THE New York opening of Graham Greene's "The Living Room" provided some interesting insights into the status of American culture, 1954. Like the presentation of the film "The Diary of a Country Priest" earlier this year, the staging of Mr. Greene's play gave the New York critics an opportunity to disport their innocence of Christian knowledge or culture. Sin? Suffering? Salvation? What, most of them asked, is all the fuss about? From reviews of "The Living Room," just as from reviews of the Bernanos movie, one gained the impression of a culture not merely secularized but somehow de-intellectualized, a culture stripped of even passing acquaintance with the fundamental concerns which had made it great.

Mr. Brooks Atkinson, for example, confessed in his *Times* review of Mr. Greene's play that a dialogue on sin between a psychiatrist and a priest was quite beyond him. And he wondered what all the play's gloominess, all its brooding over guilt, was about—and what in the world such things had to do with "religion." After all, Mr. Atkinson implied, religion is meant to make people "happy." His reaction was shared by most of the other reviewers. Result: "The Living Room" will close after a three-week run.

What has religion to do with suffering? What is guilt? What is sin? What is the problem of evil? Graham Greene may or may not have dealt successfully with these questions in "The Living Room" but the fact that the majority of New York reviewers could not see that the questions are real is a depressing sign of what our culture has come to. We have been fed such a diet of peace of mind and peace of soul, and been provided with so many guides to confident living, that we apparently can no longer grasp the meaning of spiritual anguish or pain in our drama. What, one wonders, would the New York critics make of a modern Oedipus tearing out his eyes, of a Lear raging on the heath? What would they say in the face of mystery?

The baffled reception which they gave Mr. Greene's play makes it plain that they would say very little indeed—that they are de-equipped to handle theater that encompasses such things. And so there will be no Living Rooms on Broadway; there will be only Solid Gold Cadillacs. A letter printed in the New York *Times* advised the drama critics to return to a study of the Book of Job. It is excellent advice.

JOHN COGLEY RESIGNS

IT is with wholehearted regret that we announce that after five years on the staff, Executive Editor John Cogley has decided to leave The Commonweal. It is no coincidence that during Mr. Cogley's tenure The Commonweal has made some of its greatest strides editorially and circulation-wise of the past twenty years. We trust that Mr. Cogley will continue to contribute frequently to our pages, and wish him the best of success always.

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Nuclear War

THE PROBLEM IS TO PREVENT ATTACK, AND IF THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE, TO PREVENT THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM GUTTING THE WORLD.

T. F. WALKOWICZ and WILLIAM PFAFF

IN September of 1949, the mushroom-cloud birthmark of the first Communist A-bomb rose in the Siberian skies, hitched a ride on a Japanese jet stream, and subsequently drifted over Washington, D. C. and out to sea.

The American atomic monopoly had been broken years ahead of the time predicted by Western intelligence. Emboldened by their early atomic success, the Communists less than a year later attacked the Republic of Korea. These events brought a United States military economy drive to an abrupt halt. We entered into a "police action" in Korea and began a long-term rearmament program.

By mid-1952, a bitter military stalemate and propaganda-oriented debate with the Communists marked the situation in Korea. At home, the inefficiency and waste of hastily-conceived military programs became a campaign issue in Presidential elections which brought into office a new Administration dedicated to improving the efficiency of our national defense effort, and determined to balance the budget.

In early 1953, the Republican economy axe sliced into the Air Force. Perhaps the Air Force could then have taken a cut of some size; few, however, would argue that the new Administration and the Congress had acted with either wisdom or deliberate judgment. It was fairly evident that budget considerations were the highest arbiters of military policy.

Hardly had the humidity of a Washington summer replaced the heat of the 1953 defense budget debate when Soviet success in the thermonuclear weapon field was announced—again years earlier than predicted. And there were hints that the Soviet hydrogen bomb possessed unique and superior technical features.

But the Administration's economy program marched on. What "paper wings" had been to the Air Force budget in 1953, a thing known as the "new look" became to the Army budget of 1954.

Mr. Walkowicz was associated for eight years with the Scientific Advisory Board to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. He is a director of the Air Force Association. Mr. Pfaff is an Associate Editor of The Commonweal who has frequently written on matters of military and foreign policy.

With Malenkov's announcement of Soviet thermonuclear success, the words "atomic bomb" and "hydrogen bomb" became more common, and the vocabulary of the nuclear age began to grow: atomic monopoly vs. symmetry; fission vs. fusion; strategic bombing vs. tactical atomics and atomic cannon; strategic air *and* air defense; kilotons vs. megatons; megadeaths; "nuclear device" vs. a deliverable weapon; "cheap" H-bombs; and—in a whisper—the radiation hazard and the cobalt bomb.

Yet all of this lacked reality until the spring of this year when an unexpected wind shift and fallout of radioactive ashes made some unfortunate Japanese fishermen on the *Fukruyu Maru* the first public victims of the hydrogen age. With that tragic event the facts of the nuclear age were spread out for all to see.

The facile public optimism of 1945 had gone glimmering when the Soviets consolidated their hold on Czechoslovakia. The West faced the urgent problem of deterring further Soviet aggression. They could not match the Soviets in manpower, so they accomplished the task with the atomic bomb. The American Strategic Air Command poised a counterattack capable of ruining Russia if she chose to move her troops into Western Europe. When the Soviets acquired the A-bomb, SAC had developed to the point where it could survive a Soviet nuclear attack well enough still to make its overwhelming counterpunch. It continued to fill the role of deterrent. But as Soviet nuclear accomplishments mount, the proportionate power margin of the West erodes. The point of effective nuclear symmetry, or of what ex-Air Secretary Finletter calls the "intolerable absolute" of Soviet power, is being approached.

The situation today is that the West and East each has the bombs to devastate the other. The slender balance on the Western side is SAC's superior ability both to absorb an initial attack and to counterattack, and the West's considerable advantage in the number, sizes and flexibility of its nuclear weapons and delivery systems. The strategic, counter-economy nuclear threat continues to deter war, but under present conditions it is—however vital—a highly unsatisfactory kind of de-

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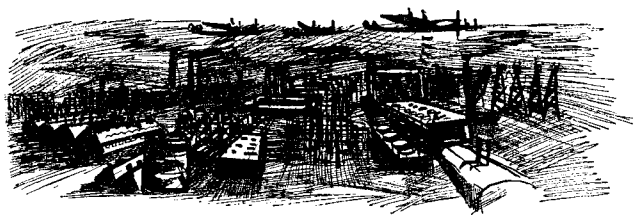
terrent which, if executed, virtually assures us that major destruction will be inflicted on both Russia and the United States. And as the power of weapons continues to increase, the West's deterrent margin will decrease as the amount of destruction which can neither be prevented nor avoided in a trading of nuclear blows nears the intolerable. Not the least of the problems inherent in this precarious situation is the moral problem.



A considerable measure of the intellectual malaise which afflicts the West today is undoubtedly due just to the fact that the West is saying that if the Russians attack, we will counterattack by bringing the world down on all our heads.

CRISES provoke extreme solutions; there are two such solutions advocated today. There are some —fortunately very few—advocates of preventive war. The argument for preventive war is based on a concept of history and human events which contradicts the belief and experience of Western civilization; it is based on the premise that man may take to himself the right to say what is inevitable in history—that man should commit the crime of aggressive war in order to prevent the crime of aggressive war. More bluntly, it says that man can predict that there will unquestionably be a war with Russia, therefore he has the right to provoke it while the West has an advantage; or, more bluntly yet, that the future justifies any means.

As it would have to be launched by surprise, a preventive war would inevitably mean that millions who have been enslaved by Communist tyranny and have borne the weight of its yoke would be killed. But if the West launched a preventive war, it would have made itself into substantially the same thing as that from which it sought to protect itself, so the Kremlin would have its revenge.

There are also some who believe that Communism will change or collapse from within and that therefore the West ought not engage in an illusory search for "absolute military security." While the disintegration of the present Soviet system must remain a hope and the aim of our policies, our diplomacy and clandestine activities, that slender hope and aim cannot be permitted unfavorably to influence our defense policies. The West cannot acquire *absolute* military security, but that fact is no justification for complacency about our military situation. Just beyond tomorrow is the era of absolute military *insecurity* for the entire free world, which will arise from the Communists' acquisition of adequate means of large-scale, world-wide violence.

Some years ago, Sir Winston Churchill said:

> What will happen when [the Soviets] get the atom bomb themselves and have accumulated a large store? You can judge yourselves what will happen then by what is happening now. If these things are done in green wood, what will be done in the dry? If they can continue month after month disturbing and tormenting the world, trusting to our Christian and altruistic inhibitions against using this strange new power against them, what will they do when they themselves have large quantities of atomic bombs . . . . No one in his senses can believe that we have a limitless period of time before us.

Communist plans for aggrandizement through infiltration and subversion, and by using military force where necessary, are now backed by both atomic and hydrogen bombs, soon in sufficient numbers. Churchill's wood is now almost dry.

A military policy cannot be predicated on the expectation of revolutionary change in the Russian and satellite homelands when those regimes employ every fifth man to police the rest. We cannot expect a decline of Communist power outside the USSR and its satellites when in Korea, Indochina, Tibet, India, the Near East, Africa, the Caribbean and South America we can see Communist-aided rot in the timbers of the non-Communist world. The constant evidence of the stated determination of the Soviets to foment world revolution means only one thing: relaxation is the road to subjugation.

To exclude extremist solutions does not solve the problem. The components of the crisis provoked by the development of absolute weapons and nuclear symmetry are these: (1) how to prevent the destruction of the civilized world, while (2) deterring Communist aggression, especially in Asia, by means (3) of some method of compensating for overwhelming Sino-Soviet land armies without trying the impossible feat of duplicating them.

THE answer, in the opinion of these writers, lies in a form of the policy of "massive retaliation" which would employ nuclear weapons against military targets, and against military targets only. We feel that such a policy could effectively play the role of deterrent against Soviet nuclear attack, could take a major part in deterring "creeping aggression," and could enable us to fight a war—if a war had to be fought—in a way which would give civilization a decent chance of survival.

This form of massive retaliation may well have been

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what was meant by Secretary of State Dulles' speech in January, 1954, which introduced the concept of massive retaliation—a concept which was presented in unfortunate terms and which lent itself to political exploitation and misinterpretation. The National Security Council decision behind that speech, however, apparently had two elements:

1. To depend primarily upon a capacity to retaliate instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing.
2. To use nuclear weapons in the event of local or general war wherever the military situation warrants.

These two elements seem fundamental to any realistic military policy.

In very specific terms, the policy would mean this: If the Communist empire attacked a non-Communist nation, the West would immediately retaliate with a nuclear assault on Soviet troops, war matériel, and, most important, airpower and airbases. This would have two advantages. It would cripple Communist military power in the most efficient and immediate way, and it would limit the destruction caused by our retaliation to legitimate military objectives with a minimum of non-combatant casualties. This makes military sense, as the effect on the enemy war machine would be immediate and drastic; and this makes profoundly greater sense from both the moral and political viewpoints than the kind of devastation of Soviet civilian and industrial centers which up to now has been understood as the real meaning of massive retaliation.

Communist manpower cannot be defeated on its own ground. If Russia chooses to begin World War III, and the West does not counter with nuclear weapons, the Soviets would in a matter of weeks control the entire Eurasian landmass. This much is admitted in the strategy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Field Marshal Montgomery, NATO land chief, has stated categorically that the West would use nuclear weapons in the event of war, and that planning at SHAPE is based on their use. Only nuclear weapons would give the NATO army a chance of preventing the Soviet conquest of Europe. And in Asia there is not even a NATO army.

The consequences of Communist domination of Eurasia would be enormously significant. If the area could even in our time be reconquered, it would not be for many years, and in the meantime purges, thought-control, the indoctrination of children, the black mechanics of totalitarianism, would have turned that major part of the world into a monolith not unlike the hemispheric war-states of Orwell's future. One may wonder too if the terrible threat and pressure of such an empire might not have the effect of producing something very like the Eastern tyranny in the Western hemisphere. At best, we would be very lonely interim survivors, huddling together against the hail of enemy guided missiles. Occasionally we might lob one back at the Soviets—but not often, for modern airpower's great dependence on foreign fuels, uranium ores, and critical metals constitutes the strongest argument of all against Communist domination of Eurasia.

It is folly, then, to think of fighting another war without nuclear weapons. The fact is that the decision has already been made: if the Russians attack, we *will* use nuclear weapons.

The problem which remains is to prevent that attack if possible, and if that is impossible, to prevent the use of nuclear weapons from gutting the world.

RECENT technical developments mean that fighters can soon be expected to carry megaton bomb loads, that through aerial refueling and other range-extension techniques they have long-range striking capabilities. This means that all of our aircraft, including the smallest fighter types, have become bomber-strike aircraft capable of delivering incredible firepower on a variety of targets. It means that NATO tactical-atomic air forces and Naval atomic-air have taken a place alongside SAC as a major deterrent to both major and limited Soviet aggression. For if their capability were fully exploited, land and Naval atomic air forces could inflict devastating punishment on both advance and deep-in elements of the Soviet military machine while SAC's bombers are still winging their way toward the Soviet heartland.

However, to be effective, NATO tactical airpower must rest on secure bases. And the West European countries must provide the assurance that neither parliamentary debates (Communist members participating) nor Communist sabotage will inhibit Allied tactical atomic airpower at the moment the Soviets attack.

Lest the authors' views be misunderstood, two points should be made clear: First, SAC's long-range counter-

economy capability is vital to our survival; SAC's budget should, if anything, be increased. Second, powerful tactical-atomic airpower, and a supporting air logistics system, have become equally vital and here the budgetary deficiency is even greater. The dangerous fiction that nuclear weapons drastically reduce requirements for aircraft should be dispelled for it is the size of the enemy's air force—not the types of bombs we will both use—which must primarily determine the size of our

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air arm. Soviet combat aircraft now number appreciably more than those of the West; and our marginal and fleeting qualitative superiority is too slender a reed upon which to base the serious risk of being outnumbered, particularly in tactical aircraft.

For if, in the event of Soviet-inspired aggression, the West were to use nuclear weapons tactically against military targets: airbases and troop concentrations, military stockpiles, bridges, railroad yards in the communications zone, they could reduce Communist tactical air forces and armies in the field to something approaching impotence in a few weeks—perhaps even days. Furthermore, a great number of the tactical targets attacked would be on Soviet or Chinese territory, and the use of precise delivery and tactical bombs could mean a great concentration of destruction on the targets with a considerable economy in civilian casualties and Western military losses.

Of course, the use of nuclear weapons makes it difficult to distinguish between military (i.e. counter-force) and counter-economy targets: many major airbases are near cities, troops can be concentrated in cities, and submarine bases are associated with major seaports. Thus, even counter-force operations would destroy portions of some Soviet cities. Furthermore, especially difficult targeting problems would arise in counter-force operations in Central Europe. Nevertheless, these targeting difficulties should not distract us from the basic objective of winning any war *primarily* through the destruction of enemy forces-in-being.

A counter-force strategy might be combined with a system of warnings; there already is a trend towards the use of warnings in Allied policy circles.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir John Slessor, author of the British "new look," has stated that if the West were forced to threaten massive retaliation, ". . . the first step would be a clear warning in secret [against] any attempt at a solution by force . . . . if that did not work . . . . the people concerned should be told clearly—by radio and pamphlets dropped from the air—what will happen if their government uses force, and warned to evacuate a specified list of cities. . . ." Serious military problems arise in any warning plan, e.g. giving the enemy a chance to exercise his air defenses against aircraft delivering leaflets rather than bombs; but warnings are a serious possibility.

Would such massive retaliation, if carried out in reply to "limited" aggression, carry with it the risk of certain general war? Serious and responsible observers ask what would have happened if America's allies had agreed to the use of massive retaliation in Indochina, and we had bombed Chinese airfields and supply dumps near the Indochinese border. Would the Soviets have attacked Western Europe or the United States?

It is an uncertain business to speculate about enemy *intentions*. For one thing, they are known only to a small group of Communist leaders. For another, they can change dramatically and suddenly in a dictatorship. Speculation about Soviet intentions is not the key to a sane outlook on the risk of general war inherent in a policy of massive retaliation. That key is knowledge of Soviet *capabilities*.

It is highly improbable that, under *any* provocation, the Soviets would attack American or NATO cities without having first the nuclear weapons and delivery capability to inflict major damage on the U.S. Strategic Air Command, the NATO tactical atomic air forces, and the U.S. production base.

Any attack on any of the cities of the West without this *ability to deliver a decisive initial blow* would be an act of insanity for the Soviets. And the West has the advantage in this situation of external lines of communication. We are geographically able both to disperse and to concentrate rapidly our air arm anywhere around the entire Communist perimeter. If we spend the money necessary to increase airbase defenses, maintain our airpower buildup, and devise means for giving the West several days' warning of an impending Soviet attack—a major problem which we have been slow to tackle—we can indefinitely postpone the day when the Soviets will be capable of the decisive initial blow.

There is another factor which works against the eventuality of general war, and which makes it essential that the West attempt to prevent a situation where one or the other side has no alternative to an all-out nuclear attack. Growing nuclear stockpiles will eventually mean that an all-out hydrogen war could extinguish life on earth.

Each exploded nuclear weapon sends into the atmosphere its share of radioactive by-products. One result of this is an increase in the radioactivity of the gases which make up the earth's atmosphere. The other is "fallout." The increase in radioactivity now

appears inconsequential and will remain so unless there is a general war with the all-out use of nuclear weapons, in which case the matter could become serious. Unless such a war occurs, radioactivity will continue to be less of a menace to humanity than automobile exhausts and cigarettes.

Fallout is quite another matter. When a nuclear ex-

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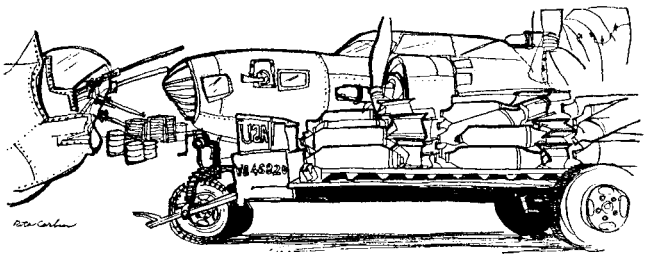
plosion occurs, particles of radioactive matter—vaporized metal, sand, etc.—are thrown into the upper air and carried by the winds until they cool and resolidify. Then they drop like rain. It was such an unexpected fallout which struck the *Fukruyu Maru*.



Atomic weapons, particularly those in high-penetration missiles and "small" bombs, do not produce fallout of any drastic consequence. A counter-force strategy, because of the target system and the economics of fissile materials, would rely heavily on such "small" and high-penetration weapons. On the other hand, a counter-economy strategy of attacks on industrial complexes would almost inevitably mean the large-scale employment of air-burst hydrogen bombs. Judging from published reports, an all-out air-burst hydrogen attack on a scale intended to cripple a modern state could render uninhabitable an area equivalent to the populated portions of Russia or North America. Unexpected winds, like those which affected the Japanese fishermen, could bring the fallout down upon the attacking—or an innocent—nation. The combination of these two dangers, general radioactivity and fallout, not to mention the incredible physical destruction involved, would mean that a nation launching all-out nuclear war would be toying with human suicide. There *is* a point of no return.

THE counter-force strategy, then, offers these advantages. First, it could be employed to stop small aggression, if other measures failed, without precipitating a general war. Second, as a deterrent against a general Soviet attack upon the West, it would enable tactical-atomic air forces to function in virtually the same manner as our present strategic air-atomic deterrent. Third, it would mean that if a major war had to be fought, there would be a realistic chance of fighting it without destroying civilization. But the greatest effect of the counter-force strategy would be in the area of public opinion and diplomacy.

A powerful trend towards "atomic neutralism" exists in many parts of the free world, based on the supposition that, since cities and seaports would be indiscriminately subject to nuclear attack at the outset of a new war, the only protection consists in refusing to arm. Thus, if clearly understood and implemented, the counter-force strategy can reverse this trend. The counter-force strategy offers the nations of Europe and Asia realistic means of defense, and a realistic chance of escaping the either/or of devastation or conquest which up to now have seemed their sole, terrible alternatives.

Is a counter-force strategy a real possibility? There is today some indication of a move in this direction in U.S. policy. In an address last January, General James Doolittle proposed this reply to any Soviet attack:

> If the attack were limited to military targets, our force should immediately destroy the Soviets' war-making potential, but only that. This point is most important. Our force would limit its strikes to: (1) military forces in being, particularly air forces—counter-air operations against aircraft, airfields, etc., (2) military stockpiles and the installations needed for offensive operations, (3) lines of communications, (4) other military targets, such as troop concentrations. . . . This would tend to limit the use of atom bombs to the atomic battlefield. Failing that, it would, for the next few years at least, enable us to fight and win decisively any war forced upon us. . .

Also in a recent speech, Air Chief of Staff General Nathan F. Twining said:

> The word "retaliation" is misleading if it is assumed to mean revenge. . . . It would serve neither humanitarian nor military purposes to kill hundreds of thousands of people in an enemy nation just to compensate for similar loss of life in our own country. If the people of the enemy country are the victims of a dictatorship it would be even more pointless. . . .
>
> We may now aim directly to disarm an enemy rather than to destroy him as was so often necessary in warfare of the past . . . . we shall hold to this principle: America plans no wanton destruction of people under enemy control, and we have no desire for revenge. . . .

Thus it is clear that U.S. and Allied strategy is moving toward nuclear retaliation against clearly-defined military targets. This was reaffirmed in a new NATO atomic study which is said to rule out the view that atomic warfare inevitably means striking first at major cities with their population concentrations. Rather, the strategy will be aimed at atomic disarmament.

The policy of using nuclear weapons does not necessarily mean a lessening of reliance on NATO and our world-wide system of alliances, but rather the capability of deterring Soviet aggression in Western Europe and the Far East with forces which the NATO and SEATO nations can afford to support over the long pull. And it means that if a war must be fought, we are doing everything in our power both to win that war and to impose limitations on it which would enable the world to rise again, wounded but free. For if the world should be allowed to fall to the Soviet armies, it would suffer torments which would leave scars far deeper than those of tactical atomic warfare.

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Maugham the Artist

HE BECAME AN EXPERT AT RELATING HIS FICTION TO THE SELF-CONCERN OF HIS READERS

SEYMOUR KRIM

THE foremost of Somerset Maugham's gifts has less to do with his work than with his personality. It is this: Maugham, judged solely by what he has written, deceived himself less than most human beings, and most writers in particular. He is exceptionally honest unto himself and obeys the Socratic injunction of self-knowledge to the furthest point of his awareness. It is this which is the trademark of Maugham's mature work and has endeared him in a very personal way to his readers. This is because his "honesty" is being continually revealed: Maugham uses himself—an unsympathetic reader might say, exploits himself—in his books with a directness which is unique in modern fiction.

The bulk of Maugham's fiction is written in the first person and the "I" is always Somerset Maugham himself. He projects himself into his imagined narratives as we do in day-dreams, and it is through using himself as a character in his tales that we feel we know much about the man and find him so likable. Other modern writers also use the first person and "tell all"—for example, Henry Miller. But Maugham's revelation of himself is all the more interesting because he appears by nature to be reticent; frankness, we judge from his work, costs him an effort, and therefore even his simplest confidence takes on meaning. The "I" of Maugham's stories is unfailingly winning: he is modest, quietly but firmly independent, canny in his appraisal of men and events, and takes a perverse pleasure in confessing to personal weaknesses in order to shame others' silences on embarrassing topics.

Maugham's work gains much of its effectiveness from just this "extra-literary" and shrewdly personal form of persuasion. Apart from melting the reader, the use of his own personality in his stories is able to give them the appearance of being factual accounts. Maugham the man is necessary to the artist in order to weight his tales with tidbits of personal truth, insuring the acceptance of his imagination by the confessions of his life. The reader, being all too human, is seduced into believing the stories by saying approximately this to himself: "A man who is so frank and truthful about himself would never lie to me about anything else."

Thus Maugham's honesty as a man, the result of his self-knowledge, is used as a means of deceiving the reader. But if Maugham were not honest he would be incapable of deception; no one knows the truth better than a liar. Let us consider Maugham's unabashed use of himself in his fiction quite closely, for while the character of the "I" is apparently as straightforward as Jack Armstrong, he is actually most sly and complex, and Maugham exploits each facet of his personal cunning in his work. So does every novelist; but few have the audacity to do it so directly, making of themselves their own leading character, without disguise, and thus necessary game for anyone who wishes to understand their work.

IF self-knowledge is used often enough in a lifetime to affect others it makes one extraordinarily adept in knowing how people will react. The person who has experimented with his own personality in "moving" or "charming" others soon becomes expert in knowing what the response will be. He knows this with a certainty denied to the majority of people because he has risked more of his self-esteem to earn this knowledge. He has deliberately made public his innermost thoughts and feelings for a purpose in which most of us will dare only our social or superficial side.

In society this kind of person is regarded somewhat awesomely because his audience instantly recognizes the audacity of a man's using his hidden self for purposes of entertainment. He has the nerve to play in public with what makes us shudder in private, and we measure the aptness of his daring by the intensity of the repressed fear within ourselves. All smiles, he is balancing the dagger-point on the tip of his nose before a full house while we are feeling its cut in the pit of the stomach.

Such a performer—Bernard Shaw, Voltaire, Oscar Wilde—is well aware of the dangerous game he is playing; what his audience does not see is that it could

This is the second of two articles by Mr. Krim on the life and work of Somerset Maugham.

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only be his acute self-awareness which permits him to be detached enough to use that precious thing, the Self, in such a striking way. He is breaking the law precisely because he has felt its authority more keenly than his brothers—not because he is "fearless" or "immune," as his public feels, but because of an excess of vulnerability. And where the law is most severe he will defy it most audaciously, bringing gasps to his audience and the knowledge of renewed necessity to himself. Such a man, it is clear from his work, is Somerset Maugham—although more quietly and self-effacingly than the three spectacular figures mentioned above.

Maugham is detached enough to play with his personality in public, and because he exposed more of himself he has been repaid with a knowledge of human response that could only have been dearly bought by such exposure. Confess a sin, and sins will be confessed to you. In his fiction this means that Maugham can accurately anticipate responses to what he writes, or the situations that he creates, and thus play on these responses with a craftiness which leads to the creation of further situations bound to trap or delight the reader.

As the just reward for his self-concern as a man Maugham became an expert at how to aim his fiction so that it would fire effectively into the self-concern of his readers. By imaginatively identifying his fears and desires with those of the reader—and knowing that this act of his imagination was bound to work because he had already experimented in life with his own *amour propre* to get the proof—Maugham gained an almost unerring insight into the private egos of his audience. And his audience is his chief concern; the knowledge of "the human heart" which the novelist is traditionally supposed to have in his work Maugham has toward his readers. Hence the intense pleasure he can give us, for unlike writers who don't depend upon an audience, but rather shape it in their own mightier image, Maugham takes pains to please us in order to gratify himself. The world of art which he has created depends for its very existence upon our acceptance of it. Without our belief in its reality it would have little of its own, for more than most arts it has been ingeniously designed for our pleasure. The performer is given life only by his audience; alone, he perishes before a mirror.

THUS the illusion of truth is necessarily more important in Maugham's tales than in those of most first-rate writers, because the naked offering of pleasure is always hiding in the wings. Illusion, in fact, is so important to Maugham that he has gone to greater lengths to maintain it than probably any other living novelist; and the extent to which he may have "cheapened" himself thereby is also the measure of his deadly seriousness as an illusionist.

Since Maugham's method in his best works is essentially the same, a close look at one work can illuminate the technique of all. A characteristic example is the long story entitled "The Book Bag," written in 1931 and a veritable minor masterpiece of dramatic construction and readability. In it one finds the same qualities which give distinction to the best of his novels and stories, and reveal why his art is so popular. As a prelude, however, let us go first to what a penetrating Anglo-Irish critic, John Brophy, has written about Maugham's work:

> The essence of Maugham's narrative style lies in his use of words not as instruments written and read, but as spoken and heard. He is less a writer than a talker—a view of him borne out not only by his novels and stories, but by his success in the necessarily oral conventions of the theater and cinema. His most characteristic work is a one-man performance, in which the talker issues a challenge to himself and then fulfills it on grounds which he himself lays down; suspense is created not by the facts of the story, but by the technique of its narration. Maugham deliberately courts a risk by his manner of telling a story; but because of the increased hazard, success merits increased applause.

The truth of Mr. Brophy's observation is at once apparent when we examine "The Book Bag." The author begins the story in the assured, leisurely manner of his later period, talking of his need for many books on his travels and hence his taking with him a large book bag (duffle bag) which contains enough reading matter to suit his every mood. Although the narrative is still in the distance at this point, we are at once captivated by the narrator's personality as he talks. His comments on the snobbery of people who read a great deal—including himself, and this strategy enables him to satirize others without guilt—and other confidences, establish an immediate bond between reader and writer.

Since he knows that his charm lies in his candor, Maugham is doing two things at once in the beginning of the story: expressing himself honestly on subjects which he truly feels, but also being very much aware of the effect this is having on the reader in capturing his interest. The leisureliness of the opening is also deliberate: it builds up confidence in the reader for what is to follow because Maugham is in no hurry to rush the action, and the fact that both he and the reader know that the introduction is interesting increases the sense of anticipatory pleasure. One further point should be made about the tone of the narrator: his lack of guile is genuine and therefore has conviction; but what the unsuspecting reader may not realize is that guile-

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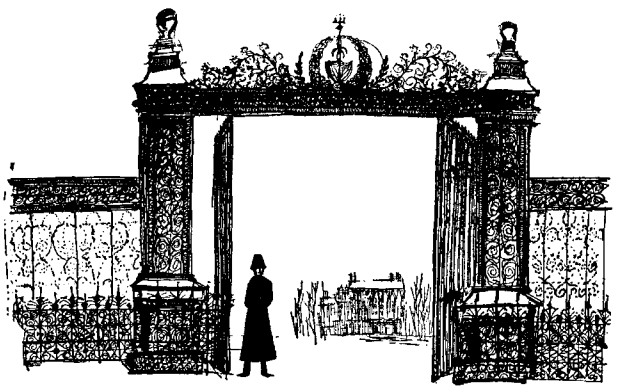
lessness has become Maugham's cunning as a writer —he has learned that being himself can also be a fine art. Thus the fox in a world of wolves.

THE transition that Maugham makes from truth to fiction in "The Book Bag" is typical of all his best work. After disarming us by the intimate chat, the author then places himself in an imagined situation; but the transition has been made so smoothly that the unwary reader is eased into the fictive setting without realizing it. This occurs by Maugham's description of spending a few days in the home of a British official in the rubber country near Singapore. Because of a book Maugham lends his host from the ever-present book bag—a biography of Byron—he hears the story that constitutes the narrative. It is told to him by his host, who participated as an observer in the action, and concerns a once-young rubber planter whom Maugham and his friend have met the preceding day



at bridge. It seems that this gentleman and his sister, both being orphaned at an early age, once shared a home together in the colony, bound together by a touching affection for each other which compensated for the loss of their parents. The young rubber planter returned to England for a short vacation and unexpectedly met a girl with whom he fell in love. He wrote to his sister and other friends in the colony that he had married the girl and was bringing her back to live. On the day of his return the sister kills herself and the young bride is inexpressibly shocked and humiliated as it is revealed that brother and sister had been living together as man and wife.

What makes the story so effective—a small work of art comparable to the best short fiction by Maupassant or Kipling—is the elaborate technique which has gone into giving the impression of no technique at all. The dramatic lines of Maugham's stories must be concealed with added ingenuity because they are so present; it is an art of disguise so refined that it has learned the best deception is complete openness.

But if Maugham were merely an illusionist, preoccupied with meaningless trickery, this would not explain the emotional effectiveness of his stories. What we find in "The Book Bag," and present in his other memorable work, is the imaginative acting-out and fulfilling, through the medium of fiction, of the basic emotions common to us all. It is not finally a realistic fiction, although it uses all of the camouflage of objective reality to justify itself and persuade the reader. Practically every suppressed need of the average psyche —romance, adventure, travel, mystery and glamor—is given the illusion of life by Maugham: a dream come true, and fulfilled with the loving care that each private dreamer, or reader, can intimately recognize as his own.

The melodrama of many of his stories, even when the characterization is thin or the situation a "gimmick," has obviously been imaginatively experienced by Maugham, and melodrama may be seen as the literary equivalent for simple anxiety. For the reader, however, anxiety in Maugham's tales is always resolved—unlike life it becomes a purified moment of peril, as in "The Book Bag," which gives the reader a shiver of emotional recognition, but at a comfortable distance. Thus the incest in this story is far enough removed from our daily experience to be exotic, and have no conscious dread for the average reader; but its shock curdles the mind at the moment of reading and calls into play the very emotions which each reader has expended on more ordinary moments of fear. In writers who deal more directly with experience the reader is not given that luxury. But in Maugham even nightmares are transformed into fairy tales, despite their unhappy endings, by the fact that it is not "truth to experience" which is to be finally found in his work, but truth to the heart's desire.

IN the process of idealizing life through fiction Maugham developed a narrative art which on occasion has been brought to small-scale perfection. No seams show when a dream is captured. Inasmuch as the practicing artist is most sensitive to outstanding work in his own medium it is small wonder that the number of novelists and short-story writers who have been influenced by Maugham are countless, although less easily recognized than those influenced by a writer whose technique is more conspicuous.

One reason for the strong influence of Maugham on fiction writers in many countries is the extraordinary amount of experience he has had in handling the art of narrative, which has certain basic principles applicable to everyone who engages in it. Quite apart from the ultimate significance of his tales, one suspects that even the most profound narrative writer can learn from them because of their extreme skill in extracting the dramatic utmost from situations that constantly recur in story-telling. Maugham's influence makes itself

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felt in the breadbasket of the fictional art itself: he can tell what the ordinary person—and the critic in a human mood—calls a "wonderful story." Since his range is limited, Maugham has crammed all of his sensibility into the story-telling area of fiction, and likely has more mastery in this particular realm than novelists who are his superior in the total sense.

It is interesting to remember that both Henry James and Tolstoy became enthusiastic over Maupassant in a way they never did about Flaubert, his teacher. In the same sense, one can be reasonably sure that the most ambitious novelists of the last thirty years have read and appreciated Maugham in a comparable way. It is likely that as practicing artists they could not help but enjoy much of his accomplishment for what it is. This is not to excuse Maugham's failings. But his thoughtful readers have already made the criticisms in their minds, for Maugham's faults as a writer are the reverse of his virtues. His need to contrive brilliant dramatic effects, while they afford the particular pleasure that only artifice can give, prevents his being the most reliable kind of interpreter of reality—by definition, as it were. In an age where the majority of literate readers go to fiction for more than just a good story, Maugham has been unable to illuminate experience in any way comparable to a Mann or Proust. His insight into human behavior, while often piercing, pays the price of the lance: it is slender and tipped for effect rather than broad or powerful. Enjoyable precisely for its clean thrusts, which give the reader the esthetic pleasure that accompanies a lack of mess, his work is criticizable for that very reason. Its somewhat staged simplification reduces life to what is manageable within the frame of a short novel or long story; and this triumph of neatness is also the automatic defeat of deeper soundings.

Maugham has told us in *The Summing Up* that his great virtue is that he can see what is in front of his nose while the greatest writers can see through a brick wall. Well put as this is, the moon and stars before Maugham's eyes are often reduced to the size of electric lights—and what men partake of the heavens in their own personalities is reduced by Maugham to tidy and often schematic proportions.

In quite the same way Maugham's literary style, a labor close to his heart, scales life down to the size of its author's philosophy: it is orderly, personal and gives intimate pleasure but is also somewhat "easy" compared to the very finest stylists. While there was an excellent clarity about the prose when it first crystallized, and still is to this day, it sometimes becomes mechanical and shows fatigue rather than the constant vigilance suggested by Maugham's remark that "to write simply is as difficult as to be good."

The directness of Maugham's writing became over his long career a baldness of expression—usually a sign of impatience with detail and a slackening of effort. His even tone often droops into a monotony of rhythm —not the "engrossing monotony" of Dreiser or Tolstoy, but that of an indifferent man talking into a tape-recording machine and not bothering to edit the final version. And Maugham's deliberate simplicity and homeliness of language—"I will proclaim my commonness, Henry James, just as you disclaim yours" —suffers with time by congratulating itself on its own limitations.

SINCE Maugham was never a robust talent at best, his frailties as a writer will likely show increasingly when he no longer is our contemporary. With good new books being published all the time, and the outstanding ones of the past competing for our attention, it is inevitable that much of Maugham's work will fall into disuse and die. Some of his work has already gone because it was thinly conceived and mechanically written. But we should remember that the same mortality rate has struck down every prolific writer of fiction: the forty-five books apiece of Thackeray, Twain and Voltaire have been winnowed down to one or two "classics" for each author and there is every reason to believe that Maughan will also gain his modest niche in the Parthenon—his critics notwithstanding.

We are wrong to believe that the conception of a writer as either "popular" or "highbrow" is a clue to his value; more to the point is the character of his creation, which can be only judged by its worth to ourselves. To each of his thousands of readers Maugham has been a writer like no other, giving them special satisfactions and sharp insights which they can get from no one else.

Judged by history, that specter which haunts the modern critic, and our awareness of the possibilities that lie within the scope of literature, Maugham is perhaps only a first-rate "minor" writer. But consider how much more durable is this minority than the inflated accomplishment of writers whose names have momentarily outshown his during the last three decades but have then, unaccountably, lost both luster and a place in our memories. Maugham has held his audience through the years, and expanded it, by consistently giving extreme adult pleasure in the realm in which he became expert; he is the last of the great flower of nineteenth century professionals in a world in which the writing of fiction no longer has the stability of a "profession," and is slowly but inevitably changing its character and its ultimate purpose.

Finally, beyond either an analysis of his work or the motives behind it, one would like to thank Mr. Maugham publicly for the amount of simple happiness he has given to so many people through his writing.

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THE STAGE

TWO FOR THE MONEY

A MEMBER of this happy breed—was it Mr. Louis Kronenberger?—once suggested that the drama critic prepare for his evening task with a subtle marriage of weight and wit to wine: thus brandy would burnish Shakespeare to a fine post-prandial glow, champagne radiantly illumine the spare, dry gaiety of Molière, *liebfraumilch* . . . . but the compounds are endlessly diverting. (I would note, however, that straight gin is the elixir indicated for the most part.) With dutiful submission, I therefore preceded my attendance at Mr. Noel Coward's "Quadrille" (*at the Coronet*) with the consumption of large quantities of an "adequate" *vin rose*: would that Mr. Coward had done the same! His new play, quite like a tacky musical version of "Lady Windermere's Fan" I saw last summer in London, is thick and suety with romantic nostalgia, the language suggesting—in its viscous impenetrability—a Jamesian idiom strained through the intricacies of Godey's *Lady Book*.

Slowly, Mr. Coward's amorous carousel turns; partners are switched, characters—dangling their participles—mount the limping hobbyhorses of wit; a wheezy tune from "Bittersweet" languidly lulls the mind. Yet something comes through: call it the musty odor of craftsmanship, an inability to be dull, an almost-perception of quality. Occasionally—in, for example, the caricature of a plumed, provincial Ouida ("they were right then, my wild voices!")—the old competence briefly flickers. And a final railway-station scene (how Mr. Coward is moved by terminals, by the very odor of stale raisin buns, the melancholy echo of a train whistle) brings into play all his power to suggest a melting tenderness, romance, the tears of things—with only the most outrageously frugal expense of spirit.

In Mr. Cecil Beaton's fringe-and-brocade late Victorian gallery, two exquisite cameos flank the full-dress portraits. Miss Edna Best exactly catches the petulant nullity of her character—pliant without, unyielding within—in a hard, brilliant performance that would have delighted Edith Wharton; Mr. Brian Aherne, as a dressy, inflated bore, makes something vivid and authentic out of what spare bones Mr. Coward has thrown him. The redoubtable Mr. Lunt and Miss Fontanne stand squarely in the center. Of them, you will recall what Mr. J. D. Salinger wrote in his novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*: "Every time you saw them, some butler was shoving some tea in front of them, or the wife was pouring it out for somebody. And everybody kept coming *in* and going *out* all the time. . . . Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne were the old couple, and they were very good, but I didn't like them much. They were different, though, I'll say that. They didn't act like people, and they didn't act like actors. It's hard to explain. They acted more like they knew they were celebrities and all. I mean they were good, but they were *too* good."

That says everything—or perhaps, not quite. For all their poised artificiality, the Lunts—I speak as a novice, who has seen them but twice—are yet a sterling example of the virtues of accomplishment, of an art in which the tools are indelibly buried in the texture. And when they have—as they do in "Quadrille's" last scene—an occasion to exhibit the subtlety, balance, reciprocal feeling for which they are renowned, we recognize again two of the permanent ornaments of the contemporary stage.

HERE now is "Fanny" (*at the Majestic*) and a very mixed *bouillabaisse* it is, too: for some of the herbs are rotten, and some of the mussels do stink. "But what she [the American theater] apparently cannot do," Mr. Harold Hobson recently said in London's *Sunday Times,* "is express other peoples: she seems unable to catch the atmosphere and the nuance of foreign civilizations." Mr. Hobson's comment was occasioned by a London production of "Can-Can" (the girls are now high-stepping it in the West End) but "Fanny" would not have mitigated his disapproval, for as an impression of another culture, it has all the savory charm and bouquet, the tactful discretion, of ham on rye at the Automat: and indeed, its general effect quite recalled to me the gastronomic improbability once proffered by a sign on the old Post Road: "Chinese Cooking—Boston Style."

M. Marcel Pagnol (in his poignant *comédie humaine* of the Marseilles waterfront) agreeably cooked the dish; Mr. S. N. Behrman, Mr. Joshua Logan, the ever-resourceful Mr. Mielziner have vulgarly "styled" it for mass consumption. What they have wrought is a massive exploitation of human feeling, inexpressibly wanting in the flavor and sense of place. "Madame, return to Woolworth's!" one would enjoin this raddled old doll, hawking her spurious, smuggled goods on West 44th Street. As librettist, Mr. Behrman never shirks the bold theme—age, birth, paternity, the lust after strange gods—yet each withers at his touch, and through the rain of packed and violent life Mr. Logan has arranged, the principals of "Fanny," its chorus, stubbornly, steadily, present the ingratiating *tabula rasa* of the bland Broadway face. It is often a winning face, of considerable charm, but I am quite as averse to taking Miss Rheingold as a representative of the French middle classes, as I would be if presented with the spectacle of Mistinguett as Queen of the Harvest Moon Ball.

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What pleasures remain then? Mr. Harold Rome's score, for one, poorly orchestrated though it is. Mr. Rome seems to have aspired to effects altogether beyond the range of conventional musical comedy—one recalls the similar (though achieved) ambition of Kurt Weill's "Street Scene"—yet "Fanny" lacks both operatic strength and the seductive, brassy satisfactions of the obvious. What weight it has comes from the performances of Mr. Walter Slezak and Mr. Ezio Pinza, both of whom play with great style and panache. Neither is Gallic; occasionally they push their raffish charm too hard, yet each flows with the juice and spice of personality. Their last scene has a muted dignity, a power of earned sentiment, quite uncommon in the theater. Mr. Slezak—reconciled, all passion spent—dying in his sumptuous bed; Mr. Pinza, in that ruined magnificence of his voice, breaking the twilit silence: the image sheds the dross of all that has gone before, and with it, "Fanny" moves onto that plane of warm, rich Continental sensibility, from which it has, elsewhere, so sadly declined.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

"BURY THEIR PARENTS' STRIFE"

ALL three of the pictures reviewed this week have two things in common: they are outstanding examples of color photography and they have stories in which the parents of the main characters are deeply involved in the plot machinations. Perhaps Italy especially lends itself to rich cinematography in color; in any case, "Romeo and Juliet," an English picture made in Verona and other Italian locations, is one of the most beautiful Technicolor films I have ever seen. Of course, the set and costume designers, as well as the handsome Italian buildings and rooms that are used, deserve much of the credit for striking pictorial effects which are frequently reminiscent of the Italian masters of painting and, when the lighting is used particularly skillfully, of Vermeer. It must not be thought, however, that this new "Romeo and Juliet" is merely an eye-pleasing pageant. Renato Castellani, who adapted Shakespeare's play for the screen and directed the large cast, has done a good job in both departments.

Castellani merits applause first of all for giving us a really youthful Romeo and Juliet. Laurence Harvey, whose English diction is a pleasure to hear, plays the son and heir of the house of Montague with the appropriate lovesick qualities and fiery verve of a hot-headed young blood. And Susan Shentall is lovely as

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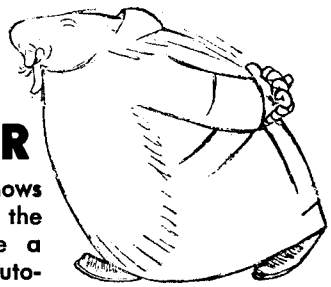

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the Capulet girl; while she may be lacking at times in delivering the Shakespeare lines that call for a more experienced actress, she looks so girlishly appealing as Juliet that she demands our love and protection throughout the tragic tale. Flora Robson as the nurse, Norman Woodland as the fiancé selected by the Capulets for Juliet, and Mervyn Johns as Friar Laurence who becomes implicated in Romeo's and Juliet's problems, are outstanding in the supporting cast, most of whom melt into a confusion of brawling Montagues and Capulets.

Castellani's adaptation has its weaknesses: a strange neglect of Mercutio, an overemphasis on Friar John, a leisurely snail's pace through some of the scenes. But this "Romeo and Juliet," with its splendid amalgamation of Shakespeare's poetry, appropriate music (composed by Roman Vlad) and stunning pictures is a major achievement of cinema and one to be appreciated for a long time to come.

ANOTHER movie that is a treat for both eye and ear, and made appropriately enough in Italy, is "Aida," which is done in spectacular style and filmed in Farraniacolor. Now that dubbing is done so successfully in films, it was wise for the makers of this version of Verdi's opera to have two casts on hand—one of actors who portray the characters and another of singers whom we do not see but whose fine voices give out in an elegant manner with the Verdi arias.

Even though opera is not my favorite form of entertainment, I was greatly impressed with this "Aida." Director Clemente Fracassi has handled his players well, particularly Sophia Loren, in the title role of the Ethopian slave torn between love for the Egyptian captain and devotion to her native land and father (Afro Poli). Also outstanding is Lois Maxwell as the Egyptian princess who loves the captain too. So stiff, though handsome, is Luciano Della Marra in this role of the captain that it is hard to believe that two such beautiful and hep women would lose hearts over him. Among the leading singers are Renata Tebaldi, Ebe Stignani and Giuseppe Campora. Those who are admirers of opera and are not particularly concerned about the fact that its plots come off second best in the cinema are going to have a good time at "Aida."

MUCH more in the accepted movie style, although equally as handsome at times as these two imports, is "Track of the Cat." Based on the novel by Walter Van Tilburg Clark, who authored that very fine anti-lynching western of several years ago, "The Ox-Bow Incident," this is also an outdoor drama, heavy with psychological undertones and symbols. But in telling the story of the Bridges family, scriptwriter I. A. Bezzerides allowed the psychology to run amuck every now and then and the characters get so overloaded with the weight of their problems as well as the Freudian implications behind the events that they become more like illustrations in a textbook than real people.

The Bridges family, with their alcoholic father (Philip Tonge), embittered, domineering mother (Beulah Bondi), three unhappy sons and one frustrated daughter, are a pretty sad lot. William A. Wellman knows how to direct a picture, but in this case, he seems to be caricaturing his people. Teresa Wright is too tense and spinsterish as the daughter; Robert Mitchum is too violent and boastful and male as the favorite son of his mother; William Hopper is too nice as the eldest, artistic son; and Tab Hunter is too naive as the son who must prove himself or die trying.

Externally, the main point of the picture is the tracking down of a mountain lion that has been polishing off the Bridges' cattle. Filmed in WarnerColor and in wide-screen CinemaScope, some of the outdoor scenes in "Track of the Cat" are as overwhelming as the great outdoors itself. Perhaps if you don't mind your art smothered in psychology, you'll get quite a bang out of this unusual film. The mountain lion itself, of course, is a symbol—of fear within oneself. Gather your courage and see "Track of the Cat."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Development of an American Poet

SELECTED ESSAYS. By William Carlos Williams. Random House. $4.50.

By NICHOLAS JOOST

THE essays in Dr. Williams' present book span the years from 1920 to 1954. The first and earliest (1920) is *"Prologue* to Kora in Hell"; on through the dates we read the titles: "George Antheil and the Cantilene Critics" of 1927; "Marianne Moore" of 1931; "Pound's Eleven New 'Cantos' " of 1934; "Carl Sandburg's Complete Poems" of 1948; and among the latest, in 1954, a memorial essay on Dylan Thomas. Both Miss Moore and Mr. Pound are allotted two essays apiece; single essays are devoted to esthetic contemporaries — Sandburg, Cummings—and to poets too young to be contemporaries—Shapiro, Lowell, Thomas, Charles Henri Ford. There are essays about painters—Charles Sheeler and Pavel Tchelitchew—and about theories of art—"The Basis of Faith in Art," "The Poem as a Field of Action," "On Measure—Statement for Cid Corman." But even this extended inventory of the contents of the *Selected Essays* can only begin to categorize the subjects and ideas that, quite literally, run riot through the book. It is rich and varied fare, a salmagundi of esthetic fashions in America since 1920.

Actually Dr. Williams' work begins much earlier than his first essay indicates. His first volume, *Poems,* was issued in 1909, and he contributed to *Poetry* in the year of its inception, 1912-13, as an acquaintance of the group surrounding Ezra Pound. He was not a disciple of Pound, whom he met at the University of Pennsylvania, but the poet and his coterie were, we learn, "important" to the young medical student. In short, Dr. Williams was intimately concerned with the beginnings of the great revolution in American poetry, a movement as influential for American literature as the 1913 Armory Show proved to be for American art. This revolution—spearheaded by Pound's Imagist group of poets and critics—was of course much more complex and comprehensive than the Imagist program and its adherents; there were other influences and poets as well. But the Imagists were the dominant, the best organized, the best or at least most vociferously led, and the most intelligibly programmatic.

Dr. Williams, however, has always stood outside coteries. We find him in these essays passionately involved but involved as an individual rather than as a member of a group writing according to its poetic canons. He was, he tells us in the Preface to this book, raised in a "religious training [that] was, as they say, liberal." The reluctance

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to categorize himself even as a "liberal" by religious training is typical of his cast of mind, and the ambivalence it reveals is basic to an understanding of this poet-critic's work.

Dr. Williams, with his scientific background, is completely at home in dealing with the concrete, the singular, the sensible. Despite his wonderful enthusiasm for ideas, despite his redoubtable learning and his wide experience of life, despite even his wide charity gained from that learning and experience, his sympathies obviously lie with eternal flux rather than with eternal order. His cast of mind is Heraclitean—not Aristotelian, not Platonic. He tells us that "modern poetry . . . and especially the free verse of Walt Whitman, opened my eyes." It is true, that remark: Whitman's ambivalent romantic heritage is the heritage not alone of Dr. Williams but of Americans in general.

Whitman believed that our life is a Long Journey into the unknown—eternal, without beginning and end, except that we moved upward from some vague primeval slime toward some vague union with the Great Camerado. Unlike Emerson, Whitman remained enough of a Christian still to be interested in beginnings and endings, even though his romantic idealism obviated the possibility of an eschatology. Inheriting the optimism of the eighteenth-century Deists, Whitman was obsessed with the Journey itself, eternal progress toward the ideal; yet the fact of idealism presumes stasis, and the Long Journey becomes not progress toward a goal but a squirrel's nimble padding inside its little treadmill. Beyond Whitman lies the ultimate self-indulgence; for the artist, of solipsism —the poem about its own significance, or about the poet's psychological processes in creating it.

"Whitman was right in breaking our bounds but, having no valid restraints to hold him, went wild. He didn't know any better. At the last he resorted to a loose sort of language with no discipline about it of any sort and we have copied its worst feature, just that." We must, then, forget Whitman, who nevertheless instinctively was on the right track, which was to find a "new discipline." We must get on our own course, must invent new modes to take the place of those now outworn. Whitman, we see, was the cause of many poetic failures, for: "No verse can be free, it must be governed by some measure, but not by the old measure. . . . We have to return to some measure but a measure consonant with our time and not a mode so rotten that it stinks."

One can only agree firmly with Dr. Williams, with the qualification

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that he is being unfair to Whitman, who did not write free verse. "I among the rest have much to answer for," writes Dr. Williams in this context. And assuredly his poetic generation must come to a reckoning for not having seen, as did Gerard Manley Hopkins, that Whitman at his representative best wrote not free verse but a finely controlled polyrhythmic verse with its own laws developed in consonance with the inner nature of English speech and poetics. The fault lies not with Whitman, but with the poets who failed to understand his prosody and his esthetics.

But where is "measure"? "Relativity gives us the cue. . . . We have today to do with poetic, as always, but a *relatively* stable foot, not a rigid one." Is Dr. Williams explaining that the discoveries of Whitman and Hopkins were, after all, the ones we ought to make for ourselves? Are Whitman's polyrhythmic verse and Hopkins' sprung rhythm the poetic standard for our century? But surely they have nothing to do with "relativity," mathematical or otherwise, in the cant sense of the word; and any systematic esthetics takes into account the fact that words and sounds and meanings exist in a complex of relatedness. A reading of good poems—or, if one wants to fall back on theory, of the *Poetics*—leads to such a conclusion more readily than any vague appeal to mathematics to come to the rescue of the arts—which, it would seem, are fully capable of rescuing themselves and living by their own laws. And as for this standard of "measure," it is well-known. Its law has always been both musical and mathematical, as Plato and Coventry Patmore were aware, and wrote.

"Without measure we are lost." Yes. But no "new measure" is a true measure unless it partakes of the eternal as well as the revolutionary. Dr. Williams' fashionable talk about relativity makes one rather uneasy, for it displays the gaps and patches and tatters in the robe of that magician, Secular Liberalism, whose wand is Science. Dr. Williams' quick, warm charity one can only hope to emulate. His scientifically trained eye is, paradoxically, at the service of poetic art; he creates some of the finest poems in the American grain; and it is this magic music which enchants us.

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An Autumnal Mood

MELBOURNE. By Lord David Cecil. Bobbs-Merrill. $5.

By JOHN A. LUKACS

LAST January I reviewed in these pages Algernon Cecil's impressive book, *Queen Victoria and Her Prime Ministers*. Of these Prime Ministers, William Lamb, Lord Melbourne, was the first, and Melbourne is the subject of two admirable biographies by Lord David Cecil. It is curious that in Algernon Cecil's book neither mention nor reference is made of this soaring and imaginative picture painted by his relative, although both Algernon and Lord David Cecil seemed to have been impressed by the same facets of Wil-

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liam Lamb's many-sided character.

Melbourne died in 1848, the year that a few thoughtful historians have lately come to recognize as the true water-shed of modern history: it was in 1848 that the eighteenth century finally died and the twentieth began. Melbourne was an eighteenth-century man. It is difficult to find adequate adjectives to epitomize or summarize the impressions given in this superb biography of a complex gentleman. He was much affected by women; he had little affection for politics. Yet, as is often the case, he was not happy with his passion, although he was a moderately successful statesman. He loved and married Caroline Ponsonby whose body and soul broke reed-like under the Romantic storm that swooped over English Society during the Regency, and a broken reed is dreadful and agonizing to contemplate. These melancholy occurrences, amidst a vanishing but still splendid and urbane society, are brilliantly captured and presented by Lord David Cecil; the autumnal mood, as in his biographies of Cowper and of Thomas Gray, fascinates him.

In 1837 Melbourne, ambling and rumbling as an almost *faute-de-mieux* Prime Minister, was suddenly drawn into a relationship that touched the bottom of his sensitive heart. The unexpected accession of the young Victoria, distrustful of her mother, lonely and dangerously earnest, made Melbourne her sole, prime, semi-paternal advisor. Theirs was a romantic attachment. Platonic in its purity, sentimental in its simplicity, Elysian and engaging, it is beautifully and memorably described by Lord David Cecil.

Harold Nicolson's important column on the death of the novel, that appeared last August in *The Observer,* was immediately misinterpreted, though unfortunately not reproduced, in this country. Well, the novel may be dead, but good biography certainly is not, and those serious and understanding minds who sense that "fact" and "fiction" belong in quotation-marks rather than in air-tight, separate categories, know this. There may or may not be many fine biographies coming in the next decade; at any rate, it has been proven by Harold Nicolson as well as now by David Cecil that good biographies can be engaging and earnest at the same time and give pleasure not only to historians but to wide groups of our many remaining book-readers.

The appearance of *Melbourne,* however solitary and singular, listed for at least one week on the best-seller list of the New York *Times,* was one of the very rare good signs under the dreadfully gray and neon-lit literary horizon of our days. Whether our editors and publishers and reviewers will take heed of such rare signs is, of course, another story.

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For more of what they say, see the back cover of this issue.

Modern Idiom, Traditional Spirit

POEMS 1923-1954. By e.e.cummings. Harcourt, Brace. $6.75.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

THE popular image of e. e. cummings is that of the iconoclast, the congenitally irreverent, a sort of Jacobin Puck. Perhaps the main value of the appearance of this collection is the chance it affords to correct this notion. For a reading of this poetry in panoramic fashion makes it clear that the central fact about cummings is certainly not the lower case letters, nor even the Joycean sense of language, but rather the way in which innovation is made the medium of tradition. e. e. cummings is a lyric poet with a long ancestry, and if he is a revolutionary, he is a conservative one.

This paradox of the popular revolutionary image and the conservative reality, which I regard as the basic fact about cummings' work, immediately suggests the remarks which Eliot made (in 1917) about how our first tendency is to praise a poet "upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else." But then, Eliot con-

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tinues, when "we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously."

This could serve as a summing-up of cummings. His finest poetry is lyric—in the sense which Valery gave that word, "the development of an exclamation." The truly memorable poems in this volume are the simple love poems, the apostrophes to existence, the joyous song of a street or a time of day. The fact that the traditional form is arranged for the eye and expressed in the vocabulary of the twentieth century is more or less irrelevant to the poetry's main impact.

Yet the dangers of lyricism—sentimentality, bathos — are here too, and to a disturbing extent. The interminable poems about prostitutes, the arrogance ("most people" as opposed to "you and i"), the out-and-out mawkishness, actually make up the bulk of these poems.

More basically, there is a serious lack of depth in cummings' romanticism: tragedy cannot always be affirmed, or wished away, by the affirmation of the beauty of a day or the spring. And this is certainly cummings' tendency. One could compare these failings of cummings to the tough-mindedness of another romantic poet, Robert Frost, in, say, the exquisitely evoked horror of the poem, "Design."

I would prefer a Selected to a Collected cummings, a fairly thin volume of perhaps a hundred poems. Such a book would exhibit the poet's real importance to better advantage. As an example of a poem which certainly would belong in such a volume, we can cite the one which opens with these lines:

be unto love as rain is unto
color; create
me gradually (or as these
emerging now
hills invent the air).

Such images combine a modern sharpness of eye and word with the delicate grace of the traditional lyric and love poem. The use of typography to place "hills" at the beginning of a line, modified by the startling "now," makes it obvious that cummings' attention to the place of the word on the page is, at its best, a very serious technique.

Ambiguous, then, would be the word which would describe the quality of the poetry in this volume. At his worst, cummings can achieve an almost Guestian bathos. At his best, he creates a pure poetry in which a venerable tradition meets the modern idioms. In these latter poems, e. e. resembles some of Lyonel Feinenger's paintings: at first you see only non-representation, cubes and cones, but then, behind the very contemporary style, the shapes of familiar cities come before you.

MARTIN DE PORRES, HERO. By Claire Huchet Bishop. Illustrated by Jean Charlot. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.

NOW and then a book for older children also makes good reading for adults, as is the case with this attractive life of the seventeenth century Dominican lay brother who is a patron of barbers, pharmacists and a number of interracial projects. One reason for this wide appeal is that Blessed Martin's career is so interesting in itself; he always acted with the simplicity and complete assurance of a saint whether he was abandoning a promising medical career in order to sweep floors or pawning his only hat in order to succor some Peruvian beggar. Another reason is that the life of this Franciscan-like mestizo has such meaning for our own times of racial tension. Finally and preeminently, Martin comes alive because the author identifies herself so completely with her hero and all the constructive things he sought to do. Mrs. Bishop presents here a series of dramatic scenes that neither teenagers nor their parents would soon forget. E. S. S.

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